

Muslim scholars, intellectuals and leaders of Islamic movements condemn French policy towards Muslims and Islam.

We, Muslim scholars, intellectuals and leaders of Islamic movements in the Muslim world, condemn the policy of France towards Islam, particularly inside France itself, towards the Magrib countries, especially Algeria, and towards the Bosnian issue.

In France itself, discrimination against Muslims and abuse of their human rights have increased. For example, the government has censored many Islamic books and publications - at a recent exhibition of Arabic books many works by prominent Muslim thinkers were not allowed; ulema from the Muslim world are now generally banned from entering France and contacting the Muslim community; during the last Ramadan, Imams from al-Azhar were denied their annual visit to mosques in France. Official government policy towards Muslim women transgresses their individual and religious rights by banning the wearing of the veil, thus depriving them of the right to study and work, whilst other religions such as Christianity and Judaism do not face like discrimination. There is also widespread harassment of Muslims, arrests, and, in some cases, their expulsion to certain African countries.

French policy towards Bosnia has been blind to the mass killing of Muslims. The French government has manoeuvred to give the Serbian aggressor time to complete his crime, and has supported the arms embargo thus denying the Muslims any right of self-defence.

In the Magrib, French policy has been characterised by enmity towards Islamic movements. In Algeria, this has included support for the discontinuation of the democratic process, support and encouragement for the military coup and the Algerian government's stand against Muslims and against any settlement to stop the massive bloodshed.

In the face of France's increasingly antagonistic policy towards Muslims and Islam, we, the signatories to this statement, wish to emphasise that Islam is a religion of mercy, justice and tolerance towards religious pluralism ("Unto you your faith, and unto me my faith") and all ethnic and cultural tendencies.

We state that we are astounded at French policy and stress that its continuation in like vein will jeopardise relations between the people of France and the Muslim people, whose institutions